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common-law marriage cannot be obtained, the claimant will be asked to explain the reason therefor and to furnish other convincing evidence of the marriage.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 3220-0021)

§ 219.33 Evidence of a deemed valid marriage.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* Preferred evidence of a deemed valid marriage is—

(1) Evidence of a ceremonial marriage as described in § 219.31;

(2) If both the employee and spouse are alive, the spouse's signed statement that he or she went through the ceremony in good faith and his or her reasons for believing the marriage was valid; or if the employee is dead, the widow or widower's signed statement to that effect;

(3) If required to remove a reasonable doubt, the signed statements of other persons who have information about what the parties knew about any previous marriage or other facts showing whether the parties went through the marriage ceremony in good faith; and

(4) Evidence that the parties were living in the same household when the employee applied for payments; or, if the employee is dead, when he or she died. See § 219.51 for the evidence required to demonstrate living in the same household.

(b) *Other evidence of a deemed valid marriage.* If preferred evidence of a deemed valid marriage cannot be obtained, the claimant must explain the reason therefor and submit other convincing evidence of the marriage.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 3220-0140)

§ 219.34 When evidence that a marriage has ended is required.

Evidence of how a previous marriage ended may be required to determine whether a later marriage is valid. If a widow or widower remarried after the employee's death and that marriage was annulled, evidence of the annulment is required. If the claimant is a divorced spouse or surviving divorced spouse, evidence to prove a final or absolute divorce from the employee may be required.

20 CFR Ch. II (4-1-12 Edition)

§ 219.35 Evidence that a marriage has ended.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* Preferred evidence that a marriage has ended is—

(1) A certified copy of the decree of divorce or annulment; or

(2) Evidence of the death (See § 219.23) of a party to the marriage.

(b) *Other evidence that a marriage has ended.* If preferred evidence that the marriage has ended cannot be obtained, the claimant must explain the reason therefor and submit other convincing evidence that the marriage has ended.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control numbers 3220-0021 and 3220-0140)

§ 219.36 When evidence of a parent or child relationship is required.

(a) *When parent or child applies.* A person who applies for a parent's or child's annuity or for Medicare coverage is required to submit evidence of his or her relationship to the deceased employee.

(b) *When individual with child in care applies.* An individual who applies for an annuity because he or she has a child of the employee in care is required to submit evidence of the child's relationship to the employee.

(c) *Evidence required depends on relationship.* The evidence the Board will require depends on whether the person is the employee's natural child, adopted child, stepchild, grandchild, or stepgrandchild; or whether the person is the employee's natural parent or adopting parent.

§ 219.37 Evidence of natural parent or child relationship.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* If the claimant is the natural parent of the employee, preferred evidence of the relationship is a copy of the employee's public or religious birth record. If the claimant is the natural child of the employee, preferred evidence of the relationship is a copy of the child's public or religious birth record.

(b) *Other evidence of parent or child relationship.* (1) When preferred evidence of a parent or child relationship cannot be obtained, the Board may ask the applicant for evidence of the employee's

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marriage or of the marriage of the employee's parents if that is needed to remove any reasonable doubt of the relationship.

(2) To show that a person is the child of the employee, the person may be asked for evidence that he or she would be able to inherit the employee's personal property under the law of the state where the employee died or had a permanent home.

(3) In some instances the Board may ask for a signed statement from the employee that a person is his or her natural child, or for a copy of a court order showing that the person has been declared to be the child of the employee, or for a copy of a court order requiring the employee to contribute to the person's support because the person is his or her child, or for any other supporting evidence which may be required in order to establish that the person is the child of the employee.

§ 219.38 Evidence of stepparent or stepchild relationship.

If the claimant is a stepparent or stepchild of the employee, the Board will ask for the evidence described in § 219.37 or § 219.39 which shows the person's natural or adoptive relationship to the employee's husband, wife, widow, or widower. The Board will also ask for evidence of the husband's, wife's, widow's or widower's marriage to the employee (See §§ 219.30–219.33).

§ 219.39 Evidence of relationship by legal adoption—parent or child.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* Preferred evidence of legal adoption is—

(1) A copy of the decree or order of adoption, certified by the custodian of the record;

(2) A photocopy of the decree or order of adoption; or

(3) If the widow or widower adopted the child after the employee's death, the evidence described in paragraph (a)(1) or (2) of this section; the widow's or widower's statement as to whether the child was living in the same household with the employee when the employee died (see §§ 219.50 and 219.51); what support, if any, the child was getting from another person or organization; and if the widow or widower had a deemed valid marriage with the em-

ployee, evidence of that marriage (see § 219.33).

(b) *Other evidence of legal adoption.* In some states the record of adoption proceedings is sealed and cannot be obtained without a court order. In this event, the Board will accept as proof of adoption an official notice received by the adopting parents at the time of adoption that the adoption has been completed or a birth certificate issued as a result of the adoption proceeding.

§ 219.40 Evidence of relationship by equitable adoption—child.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* If the claimant is a person who claims to be the equitably adopted child of the employee (or of the employee's wife, widow, widower, or husband), as defined in part 222 of this chapter, the Board will ask for evidence of the agreement to adopt if it is in writing. The Board will also ask for written statements from the child's natural parents as well as adopting parents concerning the child's relationship to the adopting parents.

(b) *Other evidence.* If the agreement to adopt was not in writing, the Board will require other convincing evidence about the child's relationship to the adopting parents.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 3220-0040)

§ 219.41 Evidence of relationship of grandchild or stepgrandchild.

If the child is the grandchild or stepgrandchild of the employee, the Board will require the kind of evidence described in §§ 219.36–219.38 that shows that child's relationship to his or her parents and his or her parents' relationship to the employee.

§ 219.42 When evidence of child's dependency is required.

Evidence of a child's dependency on the employee is required when—

(a) The employee is receiving an annuity that can be increased under the social security overall minimum (see part 229 of this chapter) by including a child, grandchild or a spouse who has a child in his or her care;

(b) A wife under age 65 applies for a full spouse annuity because she has a child or a grandchild of the employee in her care; or